58th BOMB WING - 73rd BOMB WING - 314th BOMB WING

10 MAY 1945 – MISSIONS:

#163 - NAVAL FUELING STATION (TOKUYAMA)
#164 - COAL LIQUEFACTION AND BRIQUETTE FACTORY (TOKUYAMA)
#165 - OTAKE OIL REFINERY
#166 - O'SHIMA OIL REFINERY

This mission to attack 4 different oil related sites fell to the 58th, 73rd and 314th BWs, with these specific assignments:

MISSION	TARGET	WING	SIZE OF FORCE
163	Naval Fueling station	73rd	6 squadrons
164	Coal Liquefaction	73rd	6 squadrons
165	Otake	314th	12 squadrons
166	O'Shima	58th	8 squadrons

The secondary target for all Wings was the Kure Naval Station

The primary mission was devised to further support the Okinawa Campaign by striking oil storage centers at the same time as the Kyushu airfields. (The 313th bombed the airfields.) Indications were that the bulk of the fuel and oil being used at the Kyushu airfield staging bases was being stored in Tokuyama and Otake. As such, 4 Kyushu airfields and these 4 oil targets would be attacked on the same day, with the airfield missions dispatched as a diversionary measure 1 hour and 30 minutes prior to the oil storage strikes.

The 73rd's targets were considered a single target since they were located along the same waterfront in an area approx. 1,500 by 4,000 ft and were the largest naval fueling station and the third largest oil refinery in Japan. In addition to synthetic oil production, the extensive oil storage capacity was estimated at 6,500,00 barrels.

The 314th's target was 20 miles west of Kure in an area approx. 3,700 by 4,000 ft. This target was one of the largest crude oil refineries and storage areas in Japan having extensive surface and underground storage. XXI Bomber Command was not 100% certain that any refining activity was taking place at Otake since submarine and mining missions may have very well stopped the flow of crude oil to Japan by this time.

The 58th's target was located on the south shore of Tokuyama Bay and covered 5,500 by 1,000 ft. It was the largest known oil storage unit in Japan's Inner Zone and the estimated total capacity was 2,000,000 barrels in both surface and underground storage.

All aircraft carried 500 lb. GP bombs, deemed most effective against surface storage tanks. 2 aiming points were selected for Missions #163 and #164, a large furnace building on the eastern side of the refinery area, and a large centrally located building in the plant area west of the river. The probable circular error of 1,000 ft. included all the important instalations.

For Mission #165, the aiming point was the center of the plant in the cracking unit area.

For Mission #166, two aiming points were also selected, both of which focused on the tanks where a probable circular error of 1,500 ft. included most of the tanks.

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All 3 Wings carried bomb bay tanks on this misson, meaning that each plane carried 7,300 gallons.

Air Sea rescue assets included:

- 5 submarines
- 2 surface vessels
- 3 Dumbos
- Crash boats
- 5 Super Dumbos – the largest number committed to any mission thus far.

343 aircraft took off for the oil storage missions:

#163 – 73rd – 60
#164 – 73rd – 63
#165 – 314th – 132
#166 – 58th – 88

Counting the 69 aircraft the 313th put into the air for the Kyushu airfield missions, this was the largest B-29 force put into the air thus far.

Even though this was not a "maximum effort" mission, the 73rd put 65% of their available planes into the air. The 314th – 72% and the 58th - 72%. And, the 58th, even though taking off from a single runway, put all their planes into the air in 1 hour 39 minutes.

Navigation to the target was accomplished visually with only 22 B-29s from the 73rd BW having to rely upon radar. Wind was 45 knots. 302 aircraft hit the primary targets and dropped 1436.7 tons of bombs in just over 1 hour from altitudes ranging from 14,620 to 21,080 ft. 24 planes landed at Iwo Jma upon their return and only 1 plane was lost due to a crash landing on Guam.

The results of this mission made everyone happy. The 73rd BW destroyed approx. 50% of the total roof area of the Tokuyama Naval Fueling Station and the Coal Liquefaction and Briqutte Plant. In addition, they destroyed 32% of the by-product tanks and damaged or destroyed all crude oil tanks.

The 314th BW destroyed approx. 45% of the Otake Oil Refinery.

The 58th BW destroyed 74% of the usable storage tanks and 90% of the buildings at the O'Shima Naval Oil Storage Depot.

Gen. LeMay sent all Wing Commanders a congratulatory message after the mission. (See supporting materials.)

42-65342 – 19th BG – 314th BW – Aircraft Commander – George Savage – everyone survived

The only definite point about this plane was that it crash-landed after the mission. There were no casualties. Some references indicate the plane crashed on Iwo Jima, while others say it crashed on Guam. Since XXI Bomber Command indicated "Guam", so be it.